

REPORT

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SUBJECT Aircraft Plant No. 31, Tbilisi

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1945 to 11 May 1949

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1. a. Labor force at change of shift: 5,000 to 8,000 men.
b. Production: Low-wing planes with a turbo-jet power plant below forward part of fuselage. Resembled Me-109. During flight often showed smoke trail.

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May 1948

2. Production of fighter planes with a turbo-jet below the fuselage: three per day.

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July 1943 to March 1949

3. a. New construction: Engine test stand and rifle range at the eastern edge of the factory.
- b. Employees (in March 1949): Three shifts of 2,500 each. Steady increase in labor force since 1948
- c. General impression: Modern, well managed and well kept.
- d. Production until April 1948 (observation not possible after that date): 15 to 18 fighters per week.

Single-engine, three-bladed propellor, low-winged, landing gear retractable toward the outside, plain tail unit, total length about 26 feet, span about 32 feet, radial engine, cockpit

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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raised and glassed, maximum height (including landing gear) about 11 feet, without landing gear about 8 feet.

e. Indications of production of turbo-jet fighters:
A truck carrying the following device was observed in January 1949 (Soviets spoke of jet engines):

Length: about 6 feet, cigar-shaped, forward opening: about 1 foot, total section rising in first third to 60 to 80 cm, (24 to 32 in.) opening at rear end 12 to 16 inches.

f. Own power station: Steam turbines, daily coal consumption 75 tons.

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November 1944 to May 1949

4. a. Location and layout: Tbilisi

b. New installation: Engine test stand.

c. Labor force: Three shifts with 1,700 to 2,000 workers each, 60 percent of them women.

d. Name: Plant No 31.

e. Production:

(1) Until February 1948 fighters with three-bladed propellers, V-engines, radiators in front of forward edge of wing surface, below fuselage. Cabin roof mounted on fuselage, beginning a little forward of leading edge of wing surface. Landing gear retractable toward the outside, tail wheel. Wings not sweptback, wing tips straight, 2 weapons in each wing, opening in propeller hub. Size about that of Me-109, speed: 700 km/h according to Russian statements. Daily production about 10 planes (this statement is rather vague.).

(2) After February 1948: First plane was flying in February 1948 in the presence of large staff of inspecting officers, especially air force officers and generals. See Annex for details. Daily production until early in 1949: Not more than 3 planes, often only two.

f. Test stands: Trial runs of V-engines until spring 1949. No subsequent activity on stands.

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Mid-1948

5. a. Location and layout: Same as Plant No 31, no new data.

b. Name: Aircraft Plant No 59.

c. Labor force: 3,500 to 4,000 working in two 7-hour shifts.

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d. Production:

(1) Until June 1947: Single-engine fighters (low-wing planes). Precision instruments and component parts furnished by another factory. Engines, fuselages and wings were produced in the factory itself. The operating radius of these planes was about 500 miles. Armament: three cannon; two 28-mm guns mounted in wings; 40-mm gun was in hub of propeller. Average weekly production: 5 or 6 planes.

(2) Production of turbo-jet fighters (low-wing planes) with a radius of action of about 600 to 800 miles began in June 1947. Engine in rear of fuselage. Built as single-seaters or two-seaters. Length of fuselage about 36 feet, span 42.5 feet. Armed with four cannon.

Comment:

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a. Information on Aircraft Plant No 31 was submitted in previous reports. The TBILISI airfield has also been reported on.

b. The reported 6,000 to 8,000 employees is considered correct. This would mean that the factory was working at about 75 percent of its wartime capacity in 1948. This would also be consistent with weekly production of about 15 to 18 planes early in 1948.

c. The date given in this report for the start of jet plane production differs from previous reports. After comparison with other reports, 1947 must be considered the latest plausible year for the beginning of jet plane production at this factory. It cannot be definitely stated when the propeller type fighter was first produced. It is even difficult to determine which type has actually been built. The planes were built at this factory during the war. The fact that the fuselage was intended for the installation of a radial engine (M 82) as well as a V-engine (M-105/107) would indicate the airscrew type. The reported mounting of an automatic cannon, however, would indicate a Yak-type of the Yak-9 series. The landing gear with retracting device toward the outside is an appearance which has been observed in many places and must be considered as a post-war alteration in recent series, as they never occurred during the war.

d. From the statements made in paras 1 and 2, it may be inferred that the Yak-15 type, which has been described fairly clearly in previous reports, is referred to. This type is fitted with a tail wheel, is a two-seater and allegedly has a nose wheel. para 4 admit the possibility of a new type or series having undergone flight tests in February 1948. The type described in annex seems to be that of the jet-fighter which was observed at YANOSLAVL about a year later, after February 1948.

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Fuselage short and compact

A Air intake opening

B Jet opening about 8 to 12 inches; light or dark ^{smoke} emanated when starting.

Uncertain whether nose wheel or tail wheel (contradicting statements [REDACTED]: "Tail wheel as with propellor fighter," on the other hand, "Airplane in horizontal position, at start, however, tail was inclined as with propellor fighter.")

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Take-off distance about 6,500 feet fast climb, better maneuverability than propellor fighter.

Maximum horizontal speed (about 550 miles) (Soviet statement, deemed possible by PW).

General impression: Small, heavy type, but of better maneuverability and much faster than the Me-109.

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